

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 189490

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS, FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UN, LE, IS

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: MOVEMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS

REF: BEIRUT 4227

1. NOW THAT THE LEBANESE HAVE FINALLY DECIDED TO SEND AN
ARMY UNIT INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON, WE WILL HAVE TO DO ALL
THAT IS NECESSARY WITH THE ISRAELIS TO MAKE SURE THE
OPERATION CAN BE CARRIED OUT SUCCESSFULLY. YOU SHOULD
MAKE A DEMARCHE TO WEIZMAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, DRAWING
ON REFTEL, AND WE WILL DO THE SAME HERE WITH ISRAELI

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CHARGE. DEPENDING ON RESULTS OF ILMAC MEETING WHICH WE
HOPE WILL BE CALLED FOR WITHOUT DELAY, BOTH IN
ISRAEL AND IN WASHINGTON WE MAY HAVE TO FOLLOW UP WITH
FIRM REPRESENTATIONS TO GAIN ISRAELI COOPERATION WITH THE
MOVE OF THE LEBANESE TROOPS. POINTS YOU SHOULD MAKE TO
WEIZMAN ARE GIVEN BELOW IN PARAGRAPH 3, SUPPLEMENTING REFTEL.

2. FOR BEIRUT : WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT SIILASVUO AND THE UN SHOULD BE INFORMED OF WHAT IS NOW EMERGING IN THE U.S. ROLE, SINCE SIILASVUO IN PARTICULAR MIGHT HAVE SOME SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION WHICH WOULD ASSIST AMBASSADORS LEWIS AND PARKER IN THEIR OWN DEALINGS ON THIS MATTER. PLEASE THEREFORE CONFIRM THAT WE MIGHT

AUTHORIZE JERUSALEM AND USUN NEW YORK TO PASS THE GIST OF WHAT WE WILL BE PROVIDING THE ISRAELIS.

3. ADDED POINTS:

-- AS THE ISRAELIS HAVE LONG BEEN AWARE, WE HAVE CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS BE INTRODUCED INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. THIS IS VITAL NOT ONLY TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF REESTABLISHING A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN AREA AND THUS TO FULFILL UNIFIL'S MANDATE, BUT ALSO IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT UNIFIL CONTINUES.

-- THE PLANNED DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE UNIT SEEMS SENSIBLE. ITS LOCATION WILL REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGES BY HOSTILE PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE LEFTIST ELEMENTS. ONCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, THE LEBANESE ARMY UNITS CAN BEGIN THE PROCESS OF WINNING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE VARIOUS MILITIAS, JUST AS UNIFIL HAS BEEN DOING WITH SOME SUCCESS. IT IS AN ESSENTIAL FIRST STEP.

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-- AS WE HAD LONG ADVISED THE ISRAELIS, WE SENSED THAT THE LEBANESE WOULD TRY TO WORK OUT A LEBANESE-STYLE SOLUTION FOR HADDAD AND SHIDIAC. IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT THE TWO MEN ARE NOT GOING TO BE PUNISHED OR SACRIFICED AND MIGHT EVEN BE TAKEN CARE OF FAIRLY WELL. FYI: WE NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THE LEBANESE RECENTLY DEALT WITH THE CONTROVERSIAL COL. BARAKAT BY ASSIGNING HIM OUT OF THE COUNTRY, IN HIS CASE, UNFORTUNATELY, TO THE U.S. END FYI.

-- (IF QUESTIONS ARE RAISED ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE UNIT): SAY THAT IN THIS CASE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY LEADERSHIP HAVE TO BE THE JUDGES OF WHAT UNIT OR UNITS ARE REALISTIC. THE CONFESSIONAL MIX OF THE UNIT PLANNED IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND ITS COMMANDER WILL BE A MARONITE, A GOOD IDEA UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

-- THE INSERTION OF THIS SMALL FORCE WILL HAVE IMPORTANT LEBANESE DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS. IT WILL BE VIEWED AS A FAIRLY DECISIVE STEP BY A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS SO OFTEN

BEEN VIEWED AS HELPLESS AND AFRAID TO MAKE DECISIONS.
A RESOLUTION OF THE HADDAD-SHIDIAC ISSUE WILL BE A NET
PLUS FOR SARKIS IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MUSLIMS
AND IT SHOULD DO NO DAMAGE VIS-A-VIS THE MARONITES
IF HADDAD AND SHIDIAC ARE TREATED WITH THE KID GLOVES
WHICH ARE NOW INTENDED.

-- PARKER HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR TO THE LEBANESE THAT
THEY MUST MAKE THEIR CASE WITH THE ISRAELIS IN AN ILMAC
MEETING. WE HOPE ISRAEL WILL APPROACH SUCH A MEETING NOT
ONLY WITH AN OPEN MIND BUT WITH A VIEW TO MAKING POSSIBLE
A FIRST MAJOR STEP TOWARDS REINFORCING OVER THE LONG RUN
THE CONCEPT OF A STABILIZED SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION.

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-- ISRAELI COOPERATION IS OF COURSE VITAL, PARTICULARLY
IN GAINING THE COOPERATION OF THE MILITIAS. IN PART
BECAUSE OF THE UNIFIL PRESENCE ISRAELI ATTITUDES TOWARDS
THIS PLANNED OPERATION WILL BECOME QUICKLY KNOWN. IT IS
IMPORTANT THAT ISRAEL BE SEEN AS COOPERATIVE WITH THE
CONCEPT OF REESTABLISHING LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.

-- (IF SUBJECT IS RAISED): IT IS CLEAR TO US, FROM OUR
RECENT TALKS WITH THE LEBANESE, THAT THE GOOD FENCE AND
THE ISRAELI ASSOCIATION WITH THE MILITIAS ARE NOT GOING TO
BE ADDRESSED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT FOR THE MOMENT.
THERE SHOULD BE TIME, THEREFORE, TO WORK OUT PRAGMATIC
ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE FOR THE
FUTURE.
CHRISTOPHER

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